



The Classical Chronicles

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بانٲ سعاد

Banat Su'ad

Su'ād is gone, my heart stunned lost in her traces, shackled, unransomed.

What was Su'ād the morning they set off but a faint song, languor in the eyes, kohl,

Revealing as she smiled side teeth wet as a first fraught of wine, or a second,

Mixed with the hard cold of a winding, backsloped, gorge bottom stream, pure, cooled in the morning by the north wind,

Filtered through the winds, then flooded with rains of a night traveller, flowing white and over.

Misery she who might have been a friend had she kept her promise, had a well-meant word been taken.

Some friend. In her blood brew trouble and lies, the withdrawal of vows, the trade-in of lovers.

From form to form, she turns and changes, like a ghoul slipping through her guises.

She makes a vow, then holds it as a linen sieve hold water.

The promises of 'Urqūb were for her a model, tall-tale promises, empty talk.

Here I am hoping, still again, for a bit of her affection. I don't imagine you've brought us any.

Don't be followed by what she offers. Desires and dreams are delusions

Dusk, Su'ād is travelling a land unreached except by champion, old-blooded, easy pacers,

Beyond reach, except for a dromedarian thick-neck, still shim-stepping though fatigued, or ambling.

She sweats, back of the ear-gland streaming, her range the signless, way less, unknown spaces,

With the eyes of a lone-stag, white-on-white, watching the hidden corners, roughlands and crest dunes blazing,

Thick where haltered, meaty where shackled, carriage of clear excellence among pure-studded mares,

Worn to an edge, in-and in-bred twice, from a full-blooded sire, long-necked and agile.

A tick crawls along her chest and flanks, only to slip from her glistening hide,

Hard as a wild donkey, wiry along the thigh ridge, fore-elbow from the rib-cage twisted wide,

Nose-ridge and jaw jutting down past her eyes and throat like a stone pickaxe,

Tail like a bristled palm frond, leafless, lashing down over udders that no milk flow gives away,

Hook-nosed, ears of clear pedigree - for one trained to see - checks-polished,

She strides into her gallop, legs like lances, rawboned, flying, barely meeting the ground,

Tawny along the hoof-pads where they split the shale over bare rock ridges, unshod,

As if the churning of her forelegs, when the sweat flows, when the mirage haze wraps itself around the flattop mountains,

A day the chameleon burns in the glare, sunward side straightening like iron in fire,

When the trailsman calls out, as the locusts, ashen in the midday sun, twitch and the rocks: "break trail for the midday heat!"

We're the arms of a woman, long-necked, mid aged, who rises and is answered by child-bereft mourners.

She wails, upper arms limp, her mind, as they cry out the death of her eldest, loosening.

She tears at her chest, hands open, bodice ripped ragged from the collar bones.

They scurry at the flanks, the lie-smiths, saying O Ibn Abī Sulmā you're as good as dead!

Every friend I thought I had, saying: you won't find me looking you up. I'm busy.

I said: out of my way, one who has no father! let whatever the Compassionate decrees be done.

Every woman's son, long safe, will one day be carried off on a curve-backed bier.

They say Allāh's Messenger threatens me. Before the Messenger of Allāh one hopes for pardon.

Go easy, guided by the one who gave you the Qur'ān and spelled out its warnings.

Don't take me at the word of the lie-smiths. Though talk of me spreads, I did no wrong.

If an elephant stood in my place and heard what I hear

It would shake in terror and stay shaking until it receives the Messenger's grace, God willing.

I cut through the empty regions, my armour the darkness when the clock of night had fallen,

To put my hand, not to withdraw it, in the land of the vengeful, whose word is law.

That one was more terrible when I addressed him and was questioned
and my lineage examined,

Than a prey-snatcher, mailer of the lion's lair, his den in the belly of
'Atham, ringed with thickets,

That sets out at dawn to feed twin cubs with human flesh thrown in the
dust, dismembered.

When he confront his equal, he cannot, by sacred law, leave him
unbroken.

In fear of him the wild donkey starves to the bone, shunning forage. Men
do not cross his wadi,

Except for the brave and bold on there, the shreds of his garments and his
weapons about him, carrion for beasts of prey.

The Messenger is a sword lighting the way, forged in India, a sword of
Allāh, unsheathed.

Among a band of Quraysh someone spoke, in the centre of Makkah when
they gave themselves - away!

They left, and left behind arrows with broken heads, the weak in battle,
the leaners, the unarmed.

Eagle-nosed vanquishes clothed in Davidian weave, through the dust of
war their chain-mail

Brilliant, streaming in double arrays of coils like the branches of the shrivel-
vetch, coil on doubled, twisted coil.

They side like white camels protected by a hard blow when the enemy,
stunted, dark-faced, run away.

They don't parade their satisfaction when their spears strike home, nor do
they cut and run when they take the blow.

Spear thrusts land at their throats. At the pool of death they have no
plans to flee.

Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

Our notes are compiled by Team AMAU or by
external translators or have been taken from available
translations and have not been comprehensively
checked by a teacher.

If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking beneficial
knowledge easy and kindle our hearts with sincerity
and gratefulness towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran

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